

1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative, how it promotes high student achievement and how it can be replicated.

This project, "The Oregon Trail," helps students to understand the society that evolved in the United States during the historical period known as Westward Expansion. Though entered in the Social Studies category for this application, this project is interdisciplinary in nature. As each student is engaged in assuming the identity of an emigrant traveling west, that student gains a true understanding of the life that the emigrants had while traveling west. Uniting all the students together on the day of The Oregon Trail and musical performance of The Ballad of Lewis and Clark as culminating activities integrates the social, political, and economic fabric of the society of that time period for all to see. The fifth graders carry out the project but other grade levels as well as some members of the community are involved as well.

The students are divided into groups according to homeroom class. Each class represents a "Wagon train" of emigrants that travel the Oregon Trail on the day of the culminating activity. The classes also work cooperatively to produce the musical under the direction of the music and art teachers. The students with the help of the respective teachers produce costumes, props, and scenery. During preparation for the culminating activity, students will:

- Work cooperatively to complete group assignments;
- Understand the hardships faced along the trail;
- Research the supplies needed to travel the trail and create a list of supplies for their wagon;
- Create a model of the wagons used on the trail;
- Trace the route of the Oregon Trail and mark it on a U.S. map;
- Research and discuss first aid on the trail including natural remedies;
- Research weather conditions at times of the year and determine how these affect time of departure on the trail;
- Research the acquisition of food on the trail;
- Discuss the necessity of hunting and the storage of game;
- Keep a simulated diary;
- Make ink and use a quill pen and the ink to write a letter to a relative back east;
- Learn to Square Dance for Oregon Trail Day;
- Research the role of the trading post and the role of bartering on the trail;
- Research the Native Americans of the area and discuss their response to the westward movement;
- Make Candles;
- Make an individual student quilt square to be made into a classroom quilt on Oregon Trail Day;
- Perform the musical "The Ballad of Lewis and Clark"
- Gather and create the costumes, props and scenery for the musical;
- Make corn bread, butter, and trail mix;
- Illustrate poems and stories about life on the trail;
- View artist's renditions of life of the period;
- Learn songs about the period to be used on Oregon Trail Day;
- Practice colonial penmanship;
- Play MECCA'S The Oregon Trail Game available on CD-ROM;
- Research and demonstrate knowledge of children's games of the period;
- Create replicas of landmarks found on the Oregon Trail;
- Research legendary westerners and write a brief description for inclusion on class bulletin board.

This project offers the opportunity for the students to work both individually as well as cooperatively. Involving the eighth grade students as traders on the trail as well as students from a neighboring school as Native Americans on the trail provides the students with the opportunity to experience working with students they otherwise would not meet. Parental and community involvement is an integral part of the project for the

pooling of supplies and materials needed. Much of the research is completed on the Internet and with material available on CR-ROM's. This project addresses the variety of learning styles and multiple intelligence's found at any grade level. It allows students to express themselves and demonstrate their knowledge through different mediums. Involving students will lead to a greater understanding of the material and the hands-on nature of the project motivates the students to have a better appreciation for and a greater desire to learn about a different historical period.

This project can be replicated in any school district because the materials needed are readily available and fairly inexpensive. Pieces of the project can be used with students at lower grade levels and students of upper grade levels can be used as characters on the trail or as activity coordinators on the day of the culminating activity.

2. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses and how they were identified. List the Core Curriculum Content and/or Workplace Readiness Standards addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addressees the standard(s).

The entire fifth grade population participates in this project. This includes students identified as gifted and talented, as well as those in regular education, basic skills, and special education, in a heterogeneous setting.

Workplace Readiness Standards

- 1) Standard #2 All students will use technology, information and other tools. Students research using the Internet, and CD-ROM's.
- 2) Standard #3 All students will use critical thinking, decision-making, and problem solving skills. This project calls for the student to use higher level thinking skills. During their investigation they will need to use a variety of information resources and process that information by integrating, extending and refining it. They will need to sort out the most useful information and decide on the best way to make use of it.
- 3) Standard # 4 All students will demonstrate self-management skills. Students will be working in groups of various sizes throughout the project. These groups will change with the task at hand and will require the students to work together toward the completion of the project and the presentation of the musical.
- 4) Standard #5 All students will apply safety principles. Students will be instructed in safety principles before creating foods, candles, props, scenery and other products. They will be expected to use these practices when working.

Visual and Performing Arts

- 1) Standard #1.1 All students will acquire knowledge and skills that increase aesthetic awareness in dance, music, theater, and visual arts. Students will work with music of the period as well as examine art that represents the period of Westward Expansion.
- 2) Standard #1.2 All students will refine perceptual, intellectual, physical, and technical skills through creating dance, music, theater and/or visual arts:
- 3) Standard #1.3 All students will utilize arts elements and arts media to produce artistic products and performances:
- 5) Standard # 1.5 All students will identify the various historical, social, and cultural influences and traditions which have generated artistic accomplishment throughout the ages and which continue to shape contemporary arts;
- 6) Standard # 1.6 All students will develop design skills for planning the form and function of space, structures, objects, sound, and events:
 - By performing the musical "The Ballad of Lewis and Clark"
 - By creating the props and sets for the musical
 - By demonstrating performance and participation skills in dance, music, and theater

Comprehensive Health and Physical Education

- 1) Standard #2.1 All students will learn Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Concepts and Health Enhancing Behaviors. Students will discuss first aid and the treatment of common diseases on the trail. They will examine the methods of natural cure available at the time in history.
- 2) Standard # 2.5 All students will learn and apply movement concepts and skills that foster participation in physical activities throughout life. Students will learn to square dance.

Language Arts Literacy

- 1) Standard #3.3 All students will write in clear, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes;
- 2) Standard #3.4 All students will read various materials and texts with comprehension and critical analysis;
 - by writing diary entries as a member of a wagon train traveling the Oregon Trail
 - by writing a letter to a “family member” back east
 - by gathering and synthesizing data for research from a variety of sources to meet group or individual needs

Science

- 1) Standard #5.6 Students will gain an understanding of the structure, characteristics and basic needs of organisms;
- 2) Standard #5.12 Students will develop an understanding of the environment as a system of Interdependent components affected by Human Activity and natural phenomena:
 - By researching the effect the weather and climate had on the planning for the trip on the Oregon Trail
 - By researching and discussing the method of getting and storing food on the trail.

Social Studies

- 1) Standard # 6.3 All Students will acquire Historical Understanding of Political and Diplomatic Ideas, Forces, and Institutions Throughout The History Of New Jersey, The United States and the World:
 - 2) Standard # 6.4 All Students Will Acquire Historical Understanding Of Societal Ideas and Forces Throughout The History of New Jersey, The United States and The World:
 - 3) Standard # 6.5 All Students Will acquire Historical Understanding Of Varying Cultures Throughout The History of New Jersey, The United States and The World:
 - 4) Standard # 6.9 All Students Will Acquire Geographical Understanding By Studying The Environment and Society:
 - By writing diary entries from the point of view of an emigrant.
 - By creating landmarks found on the trail
 - By creating an authentic costume demonstrating an understanding of their character
 - By mapping the trail on a United States map
 - By planning for an opportunity to trade on the trip on Oregon Trail Day
 - By planning for the necessary supplies to take on the trip
 - By creating a model of a wagon used on the trail
 - By simulating a trip on the Oregon Trail on Oregon Trail Day
3. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which objective of the practice have been met.

Assessment for this project is ongoing and cumulative in nature, using an open-ended format with a variety of settings and with a reliance on informal assessment tools to accurately measure the performance of students. Standards are clearly defined for the students before each activity begins. Assessment has several purposes: to measure student performances, to give students opportunity to reflect on themselves and to give teachers feedback to make necessary changes in curriculum for future Oregon Trail Days.

Observations – By observing students daily a teacher can make timely and relevant decisions about instructional practices and the curriculum. This daily observation of individual and group achievement will

allow the teacher to make changes in curriculum or re-teach concepts not grasped the first time. Group observation allows the teacher to direct group activity as well as make changes in groups as necessary. Performance Assessments Each activity contains a performance objective that requires the mastery of prerequisite skills that can be used and combined to perform higher level thinking skills and produce an outcome that can measure students' ability to apply what they have learned to new situations. For example students study the supplies available for purchase to travel the trail. They estimate the time necessary to make the trip and then they list supplies they would purchase for the trip. After reaching certain landmarks on the trail they write letters back east to describe the landmarks.

Rubrics - Rubrics as assessment tools allow students to know the grading criteria, insuring accountability while maintaining focus on the assignment. Each student's diary is evaluated using a rubric. Students are familiar with this method as it is used in Language Arts writing assignments. Students are also evaluated on their preparation for the presentation of the musical. Videotape is used to help in this area.

Oregon Trail Day is the culminating activity of a unit on Westward Expansion. After studying about the pioneers traveling the trail our students dress up as pioneers and walk 3 miles through town to a local park. Local police cross the students at busy intersections. Along the way they experience trading with a friendly tribe of Native Americans, trading with a Native American chief and using sign language to communicate with him. They meet members of a wagon train suffering from disease and observe a trading post cheating a group of Native Americans. Eighth graders who participated in this project when they were in fifth grade portray these. Once they arrive at the park they participate in various pioneer activities such as quilting, pioneer games, wagon rides, square dancing and lessons about horses and their use on the trail. The students from the other grades line the path outside and wave and cheer. There is cooperation from the community and members of the community walk part of the way or come out and greet the students as they pass. Community members or students from other grades provide many of the activities.

4. Describe how you would replicate the practice.

Most of this practice can be done within the classroom on a day to day basis. The final activity requires the cooperation of the community if a park is to be used and if the students are leaving the school grounds to complete the walk. The cooperation of the faculty is necessary especially if the students are to produce a musical complete with scenery. The gym teacher can teach the square dancing as part of a gym class. Parents participate by helping out at activities on Oregon Trail Day and by serving as chaperones during the three-mile walk